

# BIGGS'S BAR

AND OTHER  
KLONDYKE BALLADS

HOWARD V. SUTHERLAND

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BIGGS'S BAR

By the same author  
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Price, 75 cents

# BIGGS'S BAR

*And Other Klondyke Ballads*

BY

HOWARD V. SUTHERLAND



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1901

TO  
JOHN M. VER MEHR

IN MEMORY OF  
BEANS AND BACON DAYS





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## BIGGS'S BAR

'T WAS a sultry afternoon, about the middle of  
July,

And the men who loafed in Dawson were feeling  
very dry.

Of liquor there had long been none except a barrel  
or two,

and that was kept by Major Walsh for himself and a  
lucky few.

Now, the men who loaf in Dawson are loafers to the  
bone,

And take it easy in a way peculiarly their own ;

They sit upon the sidewalks and smoke and spit and  
chew,

And watch the other loafers, and wonder who is  
who.

*Klondyke Ballads*

They only work in winter, when the days are short  
and cold,

And then they heat their cabins, and talk and talk of  
gold ;

They talk about provisions, and sometimes take a  
walk,

But then they hurry back again and talk, and talk,  
and talk.

And the men who loaf in Dawson are superior to  
style,

For the man who wears a coat *and* vest is apt to cause  
a smile ;

While he who sports suspenders or a belt would be a  
butt,

And cause ironic comment, and end by being cut.

The afternoon was sultry, as I said some time before ;  
'Twas fully ninety in the shade (in the sun a darn  
sight more),

And the men who sat on the sidewalks were, one and  
all, so dry

That only one perspired, though every one did try.

### *Klondyke Ballads*

Six men were sitting in a line and praying God for air ;  
They were Joaquin Miller and "Lumber" Lynch  
and "Stogey" Jack Ver Mehr,  
"Swift-water" Bill and "Caribou" Bill and a sick  
man from the hills,  
Who came to town to swap his dust for a box of liver  
pills.

I said they prayed for air, and yet perhaps I tell a lie,  
For none of them are holy men, and all of them  
were dry ;

And so I guess 'tis best for me to say just what I  
think—

They prayed the Lord to pity them and send them  
all a drink.

Then up spoke Joaquin Miller, as he shook his golden  
locks,

And picked the Dawson splinters from his moccasins  
and socks

(The others paid attention, for when times are out  
of joint

What Joaquin Miller utters is always to the point) :

*Klondyke Ballads*

"A foot-sore, weary traveller," the Poet then began,

"Did tell me many moons ago,—and oh! I loved the man,—

That Biggs who owns the claim next mine had started up a bar.

Let's wander there and quench our thirst." All answered, "Right you are."

Now, Biggs is on Bonanza Creek, claim ninety-six, below;

There may be millions in it, and there may not; none will know

Until he gets to bedrock or till bedrock comes to him—

For Arthur takes it easy and is strictly in the swim.

It is true, behind his cabin he has sunk a mighty shaft

(When the husky miners saw it they turned aside  
• and laughed);

*Klondyke Ballads*

But Biggs enjoys his beer and smokes his pipe and  
sings,  
Content to be enrolled among the great Bonanza  
Kings.

'Tis full three miles from Dawson town to Biggs's  
little claim ;  
The miners' curses on the trail would make you blush  
with shame  
The while they slip, or stub their toes against the  
roots, or sink  
Twelve inches in the mud and slime before their eyes  
can wink.

But little cared our gallant six for roots, or slime, or  
mud,  
For they were out for liquor as a soldier is for  
blood ;  
They hustled through the forest, nor stopped until  
they saw  
Biggs, wrapt in contemplation, beside his cabin  
door.

*Klondyke Ballads*

He rose to greet his visitors, and ask them for the  
news,

And said he was so lonesome that he always had the  
blues ;

He hadn't seen a paper for eighteen months, he  
said,

And that had been in Japanese—a language worse  
than dead.

They satisfied his thirst for news, then thought they  
of their own,

And Miller looked him in the eye and gave a little  
groan,

And all six men across their mouths did pass a sun-  
burnt hand

In a manner most deliberate, which all can under-  
stand.

“ We heard you kept a bar, good Biggs,” the gentle  
Poet said,

“ And so we thought we'd hold you up, and we are  
almost dead !”



### *Klondyke Ballads*

He said no more. Biggs understood, and thusly  
spoke to them  
In accents somewhat British and prefixed with a  
“Hem!”

· The bar you'll find a few yards hence as up that  
trail you go ;  
I never keep my liquor in the blooming 'ouse, you  
know.  
Just mush along and take a drink, and when you are  
content  
Come back and tell me, if you can, who now is  
President.”

They mushed along, those weary men, ner looked to  
left or right,  
But thought of how each cooling drink would trickle  
out of sight ;  
And very soon they found the goal they came for  
from afar—  
*A keg, half full of water, in a good old gravel bar !*

*Klondyke Ballads*

THE CHE-CHÀ-KO\*

A POOR *che-chà-ko* once arrived  
At Dawson by the Yukon side.  
His eyes were big, his boat was small,  
Of outfit he had none at all—

Had bought one in the Golden West,  
But lost it on the Chilcoot's crest ;  
And lived so long on beans and pork  
That he had hardly strength to walk.

He made his vessel good and fast  
And trod the muddy banks at last ;  
Then wandered through the dirty town  
And sought a place to settle down.

\* *Che-chà ko*—i. e., new-comer—an Indian word. In the Klondyke a man was considered a *che-chà-ko* until he had seen the ice leave the Yukon.

### *Klondyke Ballads*

He wandered here, he wandered there,  
And heard the husky miners swear,  
And curse their luck and curse the ground  
Wherein no gold dust they had found.

"I settles this yere matter now,"  
Said he, and wiped his manly brow.  
"I aint the man to hang about  
A played-out camp. I just gets out."

And then he borrowed pick and spade,  
And very soon a hole had made  
Behind McCarthy's dancing hall,  
But found no nuggets, large or small.

"Gol darn the luck," he sadly said,  
And scratched the foliage on his head ;  
"I guess I'll make a di-rect line  
Back home and let these suckers mine."

And so he pawned his extra jeans,  
And filled his boat with pork and beans ;  
And ere the sun was sinking, he  
Was drifting onward to the sea.

*Klondyke Ballads*

OUR STOVE

WHEN we bought our stove in Dawson  
We were jubilant, and thought  
That we owned the finest baker  
Two men had ever bought.  
Said my partner, "She's a beauty."  
"She's a hummer, Jack," said I,  
"And she'll burn all sorts of lumber,  
Whether wet wood, damp, or dry."

Thirty dollars, sir, she cost us  
( 'Tis enough to make one weep ! )  
Yet we pitied the poor devil  
Who would sell a stove so cheap.  
And we packed it to our cabin  
On a scorching summer's day ;  
Sixty pounds it weighed, plus stove-pipe—  
Yet we sniggered all the way.

*Klondyke Ballads*

So that evening we lit her,  
And we watched our beauty burn  
Till the heat within the cabin  
Gave my partner there a turn—  
Made him deathly sick at stomach—  
And I scorched my only shirt  
While I watched our beans and bacon  
Lest our victuals should be hurt.

You bet she was a hummer !  
But she hummed too much for us  
On those blazing days of summer,  
And we'd stand outside and cuss.  
And we'd take our grub and eat it  
On our porch, where likewise came  
Gay mosquitoes singing anthems ;  
But the stove, sir, made us game.

"When the winter comes, old chappie,  
Our stove," said Jack, "we'll bless.  
Think of fifty below zero !"  
And I sadly murmured : " M'yes."

*Klondyke Ballads*

So we cooked our meals, and sweated  
While we ate them, for we knew  
In a month or so the weather  
Would be cold enough for two.

When the winter came our hummer  
Looked a bit the worse for wear ;  
Her top was sagging inward  
Which we couldn't well repair.  
The damper, too, was cranky,  
And the oven seemed to hold  
Some secret understanding  
With our enemy, the cold.

We could fill that stove with dry wood,  
We could cram it up with green,  
But the shavings wouldn't catch, sir ;  
Such a stove we'd never seen.  
And our bacon wouldn't sizzle,  
And our coffee almost froze ;  
And we shivered up our backbones  
And we shivered in our toes.

*Klondyke Ballads*

Our cabin was an ice chest,  
And we nearly froze to death  
While we blew upon the fire  
With a semi-frozen breath,  
And we crawled within our blankets,  
Sick at heart and fain to curse.  
Talk of suffering! No torture  
Man devised was ever worse.

Now 'tis springtime, and we've purchased  
Another and we trust  
It will act a little better,  
For, to tell the truth, we're bust.  
And if this won't cook our victuals—  
Beans and bacon, little more—  
We shall auction off our matches  
And eat our *menu* raw.

*Klondyke Ballads*

THE SORROWS OF HAIRY DICK

WHEN Hairy Dick had staked his claim  
    (Some fifty miles from Dawson)  
He limped to town—for he was lame—  
    To get the same recorded.  
It took him just one year to hit  
A spot with any gold in it,  
    But now he had it, sure.

So Hairy Dick did stand in line  
    Outside the Recorder's Office  
And thought of flowers, fruits, and wine,  
    And other earthly follies.  
'Twas forty-two degrees below  
The while he stood upon the snow,  
    And the merry wind blew strong.



*Klondyke Ballads*

The fiftieth man was Hairy Dick  
Outside the Senkler portal ;  
And some of them were feeling sick  
At heart, and some at stomach.  
But still they stood as grim as Death,  
And just as pale, and fought for breath  
That froze upon their beards.

Now, Hairy Dick had lily feet  
Encased in sacks of gunny ;  
The snow, of course, gave forth no heat  
And they were nearly frozen.  
His baby lips were turning blue ;  
His nose and ears were smarting, too ;  
And then he moved up one !

Then Hairy Dick began to jump  
In elephantine antics,  
And said he'd give his summer's dump  
To get his claim recorded.  
But there were no officials near  
Or he had lost the same, I fear.  
Then where would he have been ?

*Klondyke Ballads*

So Hairy Dick just did his best  
To foster circulation ;  
He never gave his feet a rest  
For seven weary hours.  
By slow degrees he reached the door  
Where hope is lost for evermore—  
And then they closed the office !

I cannot write what Hairy said  
About the poor officials ;  
His face, erst white, grew very red,  
His very blood was boiling.  
• His language was not choice, but strong ;  
And all that night he sang his song  
As he had danced all day.

Next morning he awoke at three  
And ate some beans and bacon,  
Then hurried back ; the fifteenth he  
To wait for Mr. Senkler.  
'Twas half-past twelve before he passed  
• Benumbed with cold the door at last,  
And fainted near the stove.

*Klondyke Ballads*

"'E's got a fit ; let's chuck 'im out,"  
Thus cried the men around him ;  
But Hairy gave a mighty shout  
And consciousness recovered.  
"I'm in, and I am in to stay,"  
He shrieked, and wiped the sweat away  
From off his grimy forehead.

By three o'clock had come his turn  
To plead before the window  
Where husky miners sometimes learn  
That there are always others.  
And Hairy Dick was told his claim  
Had long ago been staked ; the same  
Had also been recorded.

He spake no word, but straightway fell  
And from the room was carried ;  
And even now the miners tell  
Of Hairy Dick's departure.  
And one and all maintain him smart  
To own a somewhat damaged heart  
And work it out so quick.

*Klondyke Ballads*

OMAR IN THE KLONDYKE

“THIS Omar seems a decent chap,” said Flap-  
jack Dick one night,  
When he had read my copy through and then blown  
out the light.  
“I ain’t much stuck on poetry, because I runs to  
news,  
But I appreciates a man that loves his glass of booze.

“And Omar here likes good red wine, although he’s  
pretty mum  
On liquors, which is better yet, like whiskey, gin, or  
rum ;  
Perhaps his missus won’t allow him things like that  
to touch,  
And he doesn’t like to own it. Well, I don’t blame  
Omar much.

### *Klondyke Ballads*

“Then I likes a man what’s partial to the ladies,  
young or old,  
And Omar seems to seek ’em much as me and you  
seek gold ;  
I only hope for his sake that his wife don’t learn his  
game  
Or she’ll put a chain on Omar, and that would be a  
shame.

“His language is some florid, but I guess it is the  
style  
Of them writer chaps that studies and burns the mid-  
night ile ;  
He tells us he’s no chicken ; so I guess he knows  
what’s best,  
And can hold his own with Shakespeare, Waukeen  
Miller, and the rest.

“But I hope he ain’t a thinkin’ of a trip to this  
yere camp,  
For our dancin’ girls is ancient, and our liquor’s  
somewhat damp

*Klondyke Ballads*

By doctorin' with water, and we ain't got wine at  
all,  
Though I had a drop of porter—but that was back  
last fall.

“ And he mightn't like our manners, and he mightn't  
like the smell  
Which is half the charm of Dawson ; and he mightn't  
live to tell  
Of the acres of wild roses that grows on every  
street ;  
And he mightn't like the winter, or he mightn't like  
the heat.

“ So I guess it's best for Omar for to stay right where  
he is,  
And gallivant with Tottie, or with Flossie, or with  
Liz ;  
And fill himself with claret, and, although it ain't  
like beer,  
I wish he'd send a bottle—just one bottle—to us  
here.”

*Klondyke Ballads*

A KLONDYKE LOVE SONG

**W**ILL you love me as you loved me when the  
snow was on the ground

And Dawson is chilly as a tomb?

Will you love me as you loved me when we heard  
the dismal sound

Of a hungry Siwash howling in the gloom?

Will you love me as you loved me when the birds  
had flown away

From the forests of the Klondyke, vast and still?

Will you love me as you loved me when we watched  
the North-lights play

In the heavens when the nights were long and chill?

Will you love me as you loved me when each hour  
was a trial

And the soul grew sick of sorrow, sick of pain?

Will you love me as you loved me when we hungered  
for a smile

From a sun we never hoped to see again?

*Klondyke Ballads*

Will you love me as you loved me when it seemed  
we lived apart

From the others, though imprisoned, and were true?  
Will you love me as you loved me when you told me  
that your heart

Was yearning for a love it never knew?

Will you love me as you loved me when we sat beside  
the stove,

And the wind was almost bursting in the door  
Of the cabin where I met you and I told you of my  
love,

• And you promised to be mine for evermore?

Will you love me as you loved me when your eyes  
were wet with tears

And I bade you, love, be patient with your lot?

Will you love me as you loved me when we meet in  
later years

And the trials of the Klondyke are forgot?



*Klondyke Ballads*

THE DAWSON CITY BAND

A PROMISED joy forever was the Dawson City  
Band,

The band we all remember in the spring of '98;  
Its leader was a Hebrew, long of hair and left of  
hand,

Good at cooking as at music, though he found it  
out too late.

He had learned to play the fife,

And had risen so in life

That he came to be the leader of the city band in  
Dawson.

In the band there was a fiddler, very tall and very thin,  
Dressed in mackinaws and top-boots, down at heel  
and out at toe.

In appearance he was sober, and one felt he could  
not sin

Except when making music on his instrument of  
woe.

*Klondyke Ballads*

He was nurturing a cough,  
And, though his friends would scoff,  
He would tell them very sadly that he'd leave his  
bones in Dawson.

His brother blew the cornet. He was broad and  
deep of lung—  
Sported overalls and gumboots and a jack-knife at  
his side.

Had he ever played in 'Frisco he would surely have  
been hung,

For his ears weren't built for music ; and though  
he always tried

To play his level best,

He could handicap the rest,

And win by several seconds over all the band in Dawson.

Then a sickly individual crossed the Chilcoot with a  
flute

And a pair of German stockings and a pound or  
so of beans ;

And when the bag was empty then he hired out to toot

In the hopes of charming nuggets to the pockets  
of his jeans.

### *Klondyke Ballads*

An unfortunate mishap  
Had robbed him of his cap,  
And he had to march bareheaded when the band  
paraded Dawson.

The trombone man was husky, and his cheeks were  
fat and red,

And his stomach was tremendous, but he lost it in  
the fall ;

And the way he played that trombone was enough to  
rouse the dead,

But he liked to earn his wages—so he didn't mind  
at all.

His legs were very short,

And his clothing had been bought

Of the man who was the leader of the city band in  
Dawson.

The last of the musicians was the man who beat the  
drum,

A surly individual with the temper of a goat ;

He once had been a blacksmith, and now he made  
things hum,

*Klondyke Ballads*

Although (he said so proudly) he could never play  
by note.

Although he knew no fear,  
He was always in the rear  
Of the gallant band that marched along the dirty  
streets of Dawson.

The leader had an organ, of the kind we love not  
much,

And sometimes ground a solo and sometimes a  
tercet

With the flutist and the drummer; he sometimes  
sang in Dutch,

Being audible distinctly in spite of a sestet.

Then he passed around the plate,

And the miners thought it great,

And showered little nuggets on the first real band in  
Dawson.

Every morn the band was gathered near the Pioneer  
Saloon

And played for two good hours, while the mining  
magnates sat

*Klor Yke Ballads*

On the edges of the sidewalk and encored every  
"toon,"

And once raised fifty dollars for the man who had  
no hat.

Then the band went home to eat

And to rest its tired feet,

For it's work to stand for hours on the dusty streets  
of Dawson.

After dark the band was cornered in the Oatley  
Sisters' Hall,

Where the fortune-favored miner likes to lower  
down his drink ;

Where the torn and lorn *che-chà-ko* is invited to the  
ball

By the pleasure-loving lady who is never known  
to think.

There it played till one or two,

And the miners were so few

That they paid no more attention to the sleepy band  
of Dawson.

*Klondyke Ballads*

The band took part at weddings ; it made music at  
a birth

When the baby took to sleeping and gave it half a  
chance.

It was big on each occasion when beneath the frozen  
earth

The miners left their partners arrayed in flannel  
pants ;

And men would wink and say,

Making music seemed to pay,

And they tried to get positions in the little band of  
Dawson.

But the fiddler caught a fever and expired in dire pain,  
Helped to heaven by a doctor from a small New  
England town,

Who gave him something nasty and said he'd call again,  
Although he had no need to when his medicine  
was down ;

For his drugs had all got mixed,

And the fiddler had been fixed,

And they couldn't find another one in all the town  
of Dawson.

*Klondyk Ballads*

Then the trombone man got tipsy and was set to  
sawing wood,

And the drummer and the leader had a fight and  
would not speak ;

And the man who played the cornet thought the time  
was ripe and good

To skip with all the profits—so he homeward made  
a sneak ;

And the flutist took a lay

On a bench claim far away,

And 'twas winter 'ere we saw him begging grub again  
in Dawson.

So the band became disbanded, and now of all the six

But one is making money—Ikey Sutro in his store ;

Where he doles out dust to people on their watches  
or their picks,

And as he ground the organ grinds the miners,  
only more.

But the band itself is gone,

And the loafers, all forlorn,

Whisper sadly of the hours when it cheered them up  
in Dawson.

THE KLONDYKE MOSQUITO

THERE ain't no insect fleeter than the musical  
mosquiter

That summers in the Klondyke when the snow is  
off the ground ;

It can fly a mile a minute, and a fallin' brick ain't  
in it

When it strikes your little bald spot with a sort of  
rushin' sound,

- With a roarin', snortin', whizzin', a most onearthly  
sound.

With an instinct that is hellish it will light upon and  
relish

A pay-streak, sir, wherever your anatomy is bare ;  
And if you try to harm it, you only can alarm it,

For when you think to smash it the insect isn't  
there ;

- And you swear for many minutes, but the insect  
isn't there.



*Klondyke Ballads*

You can measure it by inches, and the boldest fellow  
winces

When he hears it hummin' Wagner in a key that's  
pitched too high ;

And you wish your skin was harder, for you hate to  
be a larder,

And you know that when it's hungry it will come  
to you for pie—

For the blood of us poor miners to mosquitos is  
but pie.

You will never find it yawnin' though it drills from  
night to mornin',

And seeks to aid digestion by singin' through its  
nose ;

And its drill is even sharper than the wits of Captain  
Harper

Or the wind that every winter through your lonely  
cabin blows—

How the miners curse the winter when the wind  
of heaven blows !

*Klondyke Ballads*

The mosquiter bites you sleepin' ; it will bite you  
when you're creepin',  
With a pack upon your shoulders, on a long and  
sloppy trail ;  
It will bite you when you're workin' ; it will bite  
you when you're shirkin' ;  
It will bite you if you're husky ; it will bite you  
if you're frail.  
All's one to the mosquiter, who is never, never  
frail.

. It is pitiless, pernicious, energetically vicious,  
But the angels seem to love it, for I've never killed  
one yet ;  
And although I ain't no hero I long again for zero,  
For the blamed mosquiter gets it in the neck them  
days, you bet !  
In the neck the critter gets it, and serves him  
right, you bet !

*Klondyke Ballads*

A MINER'S CHIEF THOUGHT

O F what does a miner think  
When his day's hard work is done?  
Does he dream of his girl at home?  
Does he think of the vagrant sun?

Does he think of his mortgaged farm,  
Or the debts that he left unpaid  
In the land he forsook for one  
Where seldom a cent is made?

Not much. As he smokes his pipe  
He gives his head a rub,  
And schemes how to raise the wind  
Enough for his next month's grub.

*Klondyke Ballads*

PIMPLY PETE

PIMPLY PETE was a sickly cuss,  
He never was well, and he sometimes was wuss ;  
And one day he sighed and he said to us,  
“I’m goin’ to die,” says he.

We tried to jolly poor Pimply some,  
But he wouldn’t be jollied ; and we was dumb  
When he said, “I’m goin’ to kingdom come  
For to get a fair lay,” says he.

“This life is a farce,” poor Pimply said,  
“And our claims are on certain until we’re dead ;  
And only then do we find a bed  
That suits our bones,” says he.

“I’m sick of sufferin’ day and night  
From cold that freezes and winds that bite ;  
For nearly a year I ain’t felt right,  
And now I’ll quit,” says he.

*Klondyke Ballads*

"When I was younger I heard it told  
That the streets of heaven is paved with gold,  
And I'm going up there, before I'm old,  
To strike for a lay," says he.

"This Klondyke here is a low down bluff,  
And the way we's treated is pretty rough ;  
But heaven, I guess, is sure enough,  
And I'll give it a try," says he.

"I've led a pretty oncertain life—  
But then I had an oncertain wife ;  
And that's as bad as a butcher-knife  
Between the ribs," says he.

"But now she's dead, and I guess she's found  
Some handsome angel to take her round  
And show her the sights ; so I'll sleep sound—  
Thank God for that," says he.

*Klondyke Ballads*

Then Pimply kept infernally still  
And we saw as how he was pretty ill,  
But we says, "You'll live if you has the will."  
"I ain't the will," says he.

And then he shivered from heel to nose  
And looked at us till we almost froze ;  
And then he turned up his eyes and toes  
And never a word said he.

Doctor came and examined his juice,  
And said that flapjacks had settled his goose.  
We planted him there, behind that spruce,  
And wrote on a stake, wrote we :

"Here lies the ruins of Pimply Pete,  
Who suffered from flapjacks and chilly feet ;  
We hopes he's gone where he gets some heat,  
For he was a brick, was he."

*Klondyke Ballads*

THE LAST SACK OF FLOUR

'TIS the last sack of flour  
Left standing alone ;  
Its expensive companions  
Are eaten and gone.  
Their shrouds in the corner  
Awaken vain sighs,  
As I ponder o'er biscuits,  
O'er doughnuts and pies.

'Tis the last sack of flour—  
A small one at that ;  
And I fear I shall die like  
A famishing rat.  
For 'twill cost fifty dollars  
In black sand and dust  
To purchase a new one—  
And oh, I am bust !

*Klondyke Ballads*

HOW WILLIE LEARNED TO SWEAR

WHEN Willie left the homestead where his  
parents did abide,  
And braved the dreaded Chilcoot and the terrors of  
"inside,"  
A slender lad he was, sir, a youth most primitive,  
With neither bones nor character and just too good  
to live.

His parents hugged him fondly when the engine  
gave a shriek,  
Thus suggesting very kindly that they'd better make  
a sneak ;  
And Willie's voice grew husky when he bade them  
au revoir  
And departed for Seattle in a tourist sleeping car.



*Klondyke Ballads*

At the stations many maidens came to see the eager  
crew

Who were leaving for the Klondyke in apparel  
strange and new ;

And one and all saw Willie, blue-eyed Will, with  
cheeks aflame,

And one and all sighed fondly and murmured,  
"What a shame !"

A minister who saw him placed a hand upon his  
head,

Saying mildly as he did so, "When you lie upon  
your bed

In the Klondyke, may the angels keep you safe and  
free from harm,

And be sure, in buying blankets, that the same are  
good and warm."

Little Willie reached Seattle and commenced to spend  
his cash

On bacon, beans and flour, and evaporated trash ;

*Klondyke Ballads*

On woollen goods and overalls, on hardware, drugs,  
and furs,  
Mosquito netting, rubber boots, and five enormous  
curs.

These canines caused him trouble till he chained  
them 'neath the hatch,  
And left them there to meditate, and, very soon, to  
scratch ;  
And then he bribed a steward to feed them twice a  
day,  
Then hied him to his stuffy berth and moaned the  
time away.

He had a fellow-sufferer, and very soon there sprang  
The comradeship between them of men who are to  
hang ;  
And when they got to Skaguay they were partners,  
and each swore  
None ever knew true partnership, such partnership,  
before.

*Klondyke Ballads*

Of the trip across the summit, of the hardships of  
the trail,

I say nothing, but that Willie very often would turn  
pale

When he heard his partner swearing like a demon in  
the sleet—

Heard him curse the trembling canines—saw him  
argue with his feet.

Little Willie kept his temper, but that was all he  
kept ;

For his partner stole his outfit on Lake Bennett as  
he slept,

And Willie had to purchase, at a most unheard of  
price,

Beans and bacon to subsist on till he reached his  
Paradise.

Still the dogs had not been stolen, but they missed  
a master's hand,

And would soldier in the traces in a way dogs  
understand ;

*Klondyke Ballads*

They would rend their leather harness or would ride  
upon the sled,  
And Willie, ever patient, often wished them frozen  
dead.

At last his heart grew bitter as he pondered night  
and day  
How his trusted partner fooled him, and at last it  
made him say  
When the dogs were extra lazy, "It's ashamed of  
you I am,  
You naughty little doggies." Then he blushed and  
muttered, "Damn!"

But that "damn" meant Willie's downfall; for the  
dogs would cock an ear  
When they heard the word familiar, which filled  
their souls with fear;  
For from "damn" it grew to — — —, and from  
— — — even worse,  
And before young Willie knew it, he had mastered  
how to curse.

*Klondyke Ballads*

THE YUKON PIONEER

A MIGHTY man (if the truth be known) is the  
Yukon Pioneer—

The man who trudged o'er the ice and snow in  
ninety-six or seven ;

But terribly small (let the truth be said) are the  
chances he takes to clear

Th. fence that partitions the sheep from the goats  
in the outer fields of heaven.

If I were a Pioneer I'd pray

For the good of my soul by night and day—

I would !

'Tis not that the Yukon Pioneer is wicked or prone  
to crime ;

He is better by far than is many a man with a  
chance to go the gait ;

But the lies that slip from his frozen lips are worse  
than the lies that Time

*Klondyke Ballads*

Has listened to all these centuries, while grinding  
his teeth with hate.

Why, the sun in disgust forsakes the sky  
When the Pioneers start in to lie—

It does !

The story is told of a Pioneer who never could tell  
a lie ;

But 'tis said, in extenuation, by those who knew  
him best

That had he a tongue to talk with (he had cancer,  
by-the-by)

He had certainly been awarded a medal by all the  
rest.

For 'tis held 'mong all good Pioneers

That truth is a subject fit for tears—

Just think !

They sit in the gloom of the wintry months and lie  
about God and man ;

They lie about grub, and they lie about dogs ;  
they lie about heat and cold ;

*Klondyke Ballads*

They lie about mortgaged homes and farms ; they  
lie as they only can ;

They lie about strikes and fool stampedes and  
claims that contain no gold.

They sooner would lay them down in death  
Than pollute the air with a truthful breath—  
‘That’s what.

Oh, great and grand were the Pioneers who con-  
quered the Golden West,

And we wish we had lived in the good old days  
when they were in their youth ;

But greater by far are the Pioneers who braved the  
Chilcoot’s crest,

And cursed their dogs, and their partners, too,  
and never can tell the truth—

Who give no thought for the good of their  
souls,

Though the Devil makes merry and orders  
more coals.

Ha, ha !

*Klondyke Ballads*

THAT FIRST FLAPJACK

WHEN I made my maiden flapjack I was still a  
tender youth,  
Inexperienced and reckless, caring little what we  
ate  
If it only stilled our hunger, which, to tell the very  
truth,  
Like the poor was ever with us, and would never,  
never wait.

When we landed first in Dawson we purchased our  
bread,  
But the habit was expensive—so I thought I'd  
save our dust  
By making tasty flapjacks, for as Bill, my partner,  
said,  
“If you mix 'em good and plenty we can eat 'em  
till we bust.”



*Klondyke Ballads*

When I asked him for directions I found that all he  
knew

Was contained in that one sentence, and that I  
must depend

Upon my ingenuity to pull me safely through,  
And so construct a flapjack that would keep him  
still my friend.

So I took five cups of water and a cup of "Price's  
Best,"

And stirred the mess with water till my strength  
was wellnigh spent ;

Then I salted it profusely, and put it to the test  
In the largest of our fry-pans, and it looked just  
like cement.

The stove was hot as Hades, and while the minutes  
passed

My heart was beating wildly, for I feared the thing  
might burn ;

And when I tried to shift it I found it anchored fast,  
For, having put no grease in, the flapjack wouldn't  
turn.

*Klondyke Ballads*

But I dug around it gently, though I injured it a lot,  
And then prepared to flap it as I'd seen some  
miners do ;  
Then I grabbed the pan adroitly, but the handle  
was so hot  
That I dropped it on the instant and my smoking  
flapjack, too.

With a spoon we scooped the remnants from the table  
and the floor,  
And placed them in the fry-pan with a little bit  
of lard,  
And they mixed in perfect friendship, and I let them  
bake some more  
While I waited several minutes, cloth in hand, and  
breathing hard.

Then I grabbed again the fry-pan, and I tossed that  
flapjack high—  
“Too high,” as Bill said, sadly, though the roof  
withstood the shock,

*Klondyke Ballads*

And the falling flapjack hit him fair and squarely in  
the eye,  
While I looked at him astonished, for he stood it  
like a rock.

Well, I scraped it off his shoulder, and I placed it  
in the pan  
And let it bake some minutes till the underside  
was brown ;  
Then the beans and tea were ready—so the two of  
us began  
To compare our maiden flapjack with the bread  
they sold in town.

“It’s pretty hard,” Bill muttered, “and I guess  
we’ll need the axe  
To break it into pieces, but that’s healthy, I’ve  
heard tell ;  
And the stuff we got in Dawson was more like dough  
or wax,  
And this will keep our teeth sharp, and be some  
fun as well.”

*Klondyke Ballads*

Bill always was good-hearted, and he acted very kind  
About my first day's cooking, and said some pretty  
things

About my handling flour which I cannot call to mind,  
Except that beans and flapjacks was fodder fit for  
kings.

Then Bill he took the hammer and he broke in little  
squares

The flapjack, and we soaked it many minutes in  
our tea ;

And we ate it, every morsel, for we always ate like bears,

- And Bill said he enjoyed it and it could not better  
be.

That was many years ago, sir, and since that time  
and now

I've made a million flapjacks, and the hair from  
off my head

Has fallen in the fry-pan with the moisture from my  
brow,

- And my patient Klondyke partner is silent—being  
dead.

*Klondyke Ballads*

But though I go on living till Bill has grown his  
wings,

The day I made that flapjack I shall never, sir,  
forget ;

I'll remember how he praised it, and called it food  
for kings,

Then broke it with his hammer, and ate it up,  
you bet !

*Klondyke Ballads*

SOUR GRAPES

And tell us not of lamb and green  
Potatoes, pies, and porter ;  
We'd rather dine off pork and beans  
Washed down with nice snow water.

And tell us not of feather bed  
Wherein a man might stifle  
On good, hard bunks we lay our heads  
And deem white sheets a trifle.

And tell us not of pretty girls  
And charming conversations ;  
We'd sooner talk with Swedes and one  
About our dogs and rations.

*Klondike Ballads*

And tell us not about the sun,  
Or prettiness of bees and flowers ;  
For such bloominess is fun —  
We work in it for hours

We are ever near the news,  
For the news is always long  
For so many of our shivers  
Come from the news we bring

For staid, we love to freeze,  
And to catch the fever ;  
But when we quit this lovely place  
Quit, you bet, to leave her !

APPRECIATION IN DAWSON

THE show had been a good one and the miners  
were in tears

And wiped their weeping foreheads on their yellow  
mackinaws ;

They whistled and they shouted ; they indulged in  
mighty cheers,

And almost broke the floor in as they stamped  
their wild applause.

Then they stood in knots together while the leading  
lady came

To the front, and curtsied slowly till she almost  
touched the ground ;

And the miners got excited, and they called her by  
her name

Till the lady danced on tip-toe and you couldn't  
hear a sound.



*Klondyke Ballads*

And while she pirouetted up and down and to and fro,

And the orchestra of seven scraped and thumped and tootle-toohed,

The miners talked together and considered how to show

Their unqualified approval of a Juliet in the nude.

They talked for many minutes; then they pushed toward the front

(Having silenced first the music) a miner known as Russ—

Roarin' Russ, of Circle City—who gave a sort of grunt

As he cleared his throat for action, and addressed the lady thus:

“My gal, there's no denyin' that you saveys how to act,

And your Jooliet was perfect as to actin' and to shape;

*Klondyke Ballads*

And as long as you is hired you can chalk it down  
a fact

That the Pioneer Theayter will never wear no  
crape.

“We ain’t so mighty friendly to your little Rome-o,  
For he makes too bloomin’ easy with a lady, so  
we think ;

But you was just a hummer, and durin’ all the show  
We never took to yawnin’ or to orderin’ of  
drink.

“We’re sorry that the parson made a bungle of his  
work,

And the liquor was too heavy for a lady of your  
class ;

And we’re sorry for your cousin who was killed by  
Romy’s dirk—

Yet you couldn’t but expect it, for that Romy is  
an ass.

*Klondyke Ballads*

“ Now, what we've been a talkin' of is how to show  
you best

That we like your style and figure, and we decided,  
fust,

That as a gal is human, and must eat and be well  
dressed,

We couldn't do no better than to offer you some  
dust.

“ Then we knew as how in 'Frisco lady actors whom  
one knows

Gets violets or something with a smell that's good  
and strong,

But in Dawson there's no flowers, and the bottled  
scents is froze—

So we thought of something better and we hope  
we ain't done wrong.

“ You know, I guess, by this time that vegetables be  
A quite onheard of luxury in this yere mining  
hell ;

*Klondyke Ballads*

Nor love nor money buys 'em, nor pull, and so, you  
see,  
They're worth much more than roses and healthier  
as well.

"We cannot get you flowers; but my partner,  
Lousetown Joe,  
Has a crate of fresh potatoes, and we offers you a  
third;  
And here's the sack of gold dust, and we're mighty  
glad to know  
That you'll never get the scurvy—for, Jooliet,  
you're a bird."

Then the lady dropped a curtesy and grabbed the  
little sack,  
And said that Mr. Tybalt (better known as Pot-  
luck Pete)  
Would fetch the spuds to-morrow; then she pirou-  
etted back  
And the miners yelled together until they struck  
the street.

*Klondyke Ballads*

IN WINTER

**B**EANS and bacon thrice a day,  
Such is our diet ;  
We could live off better fare  
Had we dust to buy it ;  
But our sacks are void of gold,  
No one gives us credit ;  
We are in a pretty fix,  
But we grin and bear it.

Fruit is coming to an end,  
Ditto our flour ;  
Once a week we hit our mush—  
Mush, the source of power.  
Neither milk nor sugar now  
Graces our table ;  
Once we had a stock of meats—  
Now we read a label.

*Klondyke Ballads*

Sunday is our day for spuds,  
Coffee comes on Friday ;  
Thursdays we partake of rice,  
Tuesday *was* our pie day.  
He who mentions butter now  
Has to wash the dishes ;  
Still we hope to realize  
Some day our wishes.

*Klondyke Ballads*

COOKING IN THE KLONDYKE

“THERE'S something burning on the stove,”  
The first *che-chà-ko* said ;  
“It doesn't smell like bacon,  
So I guess it is the bread.”

“The bread be d——,” the cook replied  
(A mighty cook was he),  
“I haven't baked the stuff as yet ;  
“Perhaps it is the tea !”

“The tea can't burn, you stupid ass,”  
His partner made reply.  
“I'll bet you've spoilt beyond repair  
My baking powder pie.”

“The pie you brag about,” said cook,  
“Was baked this early morn.  
I tried a piece of it and wished  
I never had been born.”

*Klondyke Ballads*

The first *che-chà-ko* puffed his pipe  
And thought him what to say.  
“God knows,” said he, “that your pies are  
Far heavier than clay.”

“You eat them all the same,” said cook,  
“And half my share as well.  
But something’s burning—that is sure ;  
I know it by the smell.”

“I say it is the bacon, sir !”  
“And I say it is not !”

The cook then ope’d the oven door,  
And swore, for it was hot.

“Ye gods !” he yelled, “’tis one on you,  
Your gum boots I espy !”

The first *che-chà-ko* held his peace—  
He’d put them there to dry !



*Klondyke Ballads*

BILL MCGEE

“ARE you takin’ any men on, boss?” asked  
Billy J. McGee

Of the man who ran Red Murphy’s claim, Dominion 33.

The foreman sized the speaker up, then unto him  
says he :

“You look a husky, skookum man, so you can work  
for me,

And you’ll find that I am pretty square if me and  
you agree.”

Now, Bill was only five foot high but broader than a  
bear ;

His legs looked thick, his back looked broad, his  
shoulders good and square ;

He had a D Profundis voice, accounted somewhat  
rare ;

*Klondyke Ballads*

His hands were hid, his arms looked long, as likewise  
did his hair,  
But in his forehead there were lines that spoke of  
constant care.

So Bill McGee first got his job and then he said:

“I say,

You’ve took me on to work for you, but how about  
my pay?

I ain’t the sort to work blamed hard, and then be  
told some day

• There ain’t no money in the dump and I can walk  
away.

That’s what three fellows had to do on 27 A.”

The foreman rolled his plug around, then looked  
Bill in the eye.

• “You’re all right, Bill,” he says to him, “I likes a  
man what’s spry.

*Klondyke Ballads*

This 33's a dead sure thing, gumboot me if I lie ;  
There's fifty thousand in that dump—just take a pan  
and try."

Bill took a pan and found a chunk. He dropped it  
with a sigh.

When Bill McGee began to work they set him haul-  
ing wood,

But every man upon the claim hauled more than  
Billy could ;

He slipped and stumbled on the snow, and when at  
last he stood

He almost froze himself to death, and, though that  
isn't good,

The foreman swore at Bill McGee and only hoped  
he would.

So Bill was set to sawing logs, and he sawed a log or  
two,

But the third one always stumped him, for he  
couldn't saw it through ;

*Klondyke Ballads*

The cold attacked his fingers and his lips looked  
pretty blue,  
And the foreman got excited and told him who was  
who,  
And asked him what he lived for, and, pray, what  
could he do?

Then Bill next tried the windlass, but he didn't try  
it long;  
For though his arms looked powerful and though his  
back looked strong  
He couldn't hoist the bucket, and the foreman sang  
a song  
(Though the words weren't very proper) and asked  
him what was wrong,  
And drove him from the windlass and wished him in  
Hong-Kong.

But the foreman was a Christian, although he had to  
kick;  
So he sent Bill down the ladder with instructions  
how to pick;

*Klondyke Ballads*

But a rung gave way beneath him and he landed like  
a brick,

And they put him in the bucket and hauled him up  
darned quick,

But Billy's neck was broken and he was looking sick.

They laid him in an outhouse where the dead man  
quickly froze ;

And the friendly foreman muttered as he sadly blew  
his nose :

" This life is d—— uncertain and pretty full of woes,  
And the men who die the quickest is generally those  
Built powerful, like Bill here, whose days is at a  
close."

" I liked him good and p . . . " one burly miner  
said,

As he drummed his fingers lightly on the dead man's  
icy head.

" He never ate no butter on his flapjacks or his bread,  
And never used no sugar—I took his share instead.

But, boys, he never once undressed before he went  
to bed !"

*Klondyke Ballads*

The miners thought it funny and shook their heads  
thereat,

Till he who praised the dead man removed his mitts  
and hat.

"We'll take 'em off him this time," he said, and  
then he spat.

"We haven't got the linen for to wind around a cat,  
But we'll sew him up in sacking and let it go at that."

And so they took Bill's clothes off, and none of them  
could speak

At first from sheer amazement at what they called  
his "cheek."

The foreman broke the silence: "That Bill, there,  
was a freak,

And if he still was living I'd label him a sneak.

I always had to wonder why the fellow was so weak."

From off the corpse before them they took two  
mackinaws,

Three shirts and heavy undervests and four thick  
pair of drawers;

*Klondyke Ballads*

Three pair of canvas overalls and socks it seems by  
scores ;  
And when they got to bedrock they almost broke in  
roars  
Of laughter at the foreman, who thought they had  
good cause.

For Bill was over sixty and was made of bone and  
skin,  
And the miners when they eyed him had to turn  
aside and grin.  
His arms were like two matches ; each leg was like a  
pin—  
You could almost look right through him he was so  
very thin,  
And for such a man to labor it really seemed a sin.

But they covered him with sacking sewed as neat as  
neat could be,  
And they fixed him up for shipment to his friends  
across the sea.

*Klondyke Ballads*

And the foreman muttered softly : " If there's a fool  
it's me,  
For I was made a fool of by that there Bill McGee ;  
But now he's dead forever—so I've the laugh on  
he."





